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PROJECT SLAMMER

Understanding Espionage:  
Subject's Own Perspectives  
and  
Situational Influences

PROJECT STAFF: Research Team - LTC (Dr.) Neil S. Hibler (AFOSI) - Project Leader  
SSA (Dr.) Richard L. Ault, Jr. (FBI)  
Dr. Joseph Krofcheck (OSAF)

Consultants - A panel of twelve behavioral scientists, personnel security specialists and counterintelligence investigators representing agencies of the intelligence community

INTRODUCTION: This study examines espionage by directly assessing and actually interviewing spies. This approach has proven to be effective in understanding murderers, rapists and other violent offenders, revealing insights available by no other means. Slammer has the support and participation of all of the agencies which met under the former SECOM structure. Project Slammer is the IC's only espionage research program and the first community-wide effort to research and remedy the insider threat.

GOALS: This is a multidisciplinary effort to create a scientific research foundation to serve the community's on-going need to deal with espionage. It starts by refining a methodology to identify and collect relevant data and establishing an information base which permits the examination of specific characteristics of individuals convicted of espionage, and the circumstances that influenced their values, perceptions and actions. The identification of patterns of behavior will aid in recognizing espionage indicators and trends that change over time. Further, the effects of incarceration have proven helpful (in violent crimes) in facilitating subjects' greater disclosure, suggesting a potential for enhanced damage assessments and more detailed revelations concerning tradecraft. To assure veracity of information, every effort is made to confirm subjects' perceptions by interviewing intimates (spouses and paramours), friends and co-workers. These interviews may also reveal how to better recognize the signs of espionage that often go unnoticed in the subject's immediate duty section. Finally, background investigation content, criteria for selection, and security clearance adjudication will be aided by isolating risk factors that are of demonstrated, statistical significance. This will be augmented by a spin-off study now being planned by NSA. This compatible project, based on Slammer concepts and procedures, will result in the debriefing of personnel exited for cause from sensitive positions.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH: Importantly, Slammer combines findings of earlier research. An in-depth analysis of four CIA espionage cases revealed that agency employees were initially loyal, but that as time went on, events in their lives created a change of perspective and values. The result was the development of a "sense of entitlement" which allowed subjects to rationalize that their acts were justified. This development of rationalization is a personal process, dependent on individualized

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perceptions rather than objective reality. Consequently, the key to understanding the eroding of loyalty requires understanding each spy's subjective perceptions and beliefs during the period the espionage began. Fortunately, a new methodology has been developed by the FBI. It was designed to study the perceptions and behaviors of criminals by asking subjects to explain what happened. Use of this method with violent felons has shown that, surprisingly, most have been willing to discuss their crimes and reveal thoughts and feelings which lead to, and continued to motivate their violations.

These important advances form the foundation for Slammer, providing insight into what and how to explore. No other study has ever been designed to establish a comprehensive espionage research program; at this time we are not aware of any other espionage research in the Government.

**PROGRESS TO DATE:** The pilot phase of the study is designed to build data collection tools and explore their use. It consists of five cases in which subjects are approached to participate. The pilot phase of the study has, to date, developed initial interview protocols and a psychological assessment battery. Interagency administrative procedures for case review, contacting and interviewing subjects have been accomplished. Two subject interviews and a dozen friend/co-worker/spouse interviews have been completed. A third subject was evaluated and approached, but declined to participate at this time. Case four is scheduled for the week of November 17th.

**MILESTONES:** Completion of pilot phase. By June 1, 1987, initial development of the data collection methodology will be completed. This will consist of five subject interviews/approaches, refined interview protocols, the procurement of data management software, receipt of video recording equipment and a brief descriptive report for each case, emphasizing elements for further study. Modifications to the protocol will also result from the collaborative NSA study, so that control groups may be established to make comparisons between issues which relate to espionage and those of other security or performance risks.

#### WHAT IS NEEDED NOW:

1. It is essential that this project have continued support. Previously SECOM provided sponsorship as well as a forum both to enhance necessary interagency coordination and to share findings. In the absence of SECOM we need to clarify our source of support and lines of accountability.

2. Funding to complete the pilot phase is estimated to cost less than \$25,000. Expenses included are travel, data base management software, psychological tests and associated supplies.

**SUMMARY:** Project Slammer proposes to establish an ongoing program to study espionage by state-of-the-art behavioral science methods which have been proven to be effective in the study of other major crimes. It incorporates a multidisciplinary team and represents the expertise and experience of scientific and security professionals from the agencies of the intelligence community. Slammer promises to confirm current security efforts which are effective, and to continually improve those which can contribute a greater share to safeguarding our nation's secrets.

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